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Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 00342 222054Z

70
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 SAJ-01

TRSY-02 DODE-00 H-01 NSC-05 SS-15 /065 W
---------- 128610
R 221820Z JAN 75
FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9697
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 0342

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, PFOR, UR
SUBJECT: BREZHNEV

REF: STATE 013690

1. MISSION MOST APPRECIATIVE OF INFORMATION PROVIDED REFTEL WHICH ALLIES WELCOMED AND CAREFULLY NOTED AT JANUARY 21 POLADS. REPRESENTATIVES OF DENMARK, CANADA, FRANCE, TURKEY AND THE UK INDICATED INFORMATION AND ANALYSES OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS WERE IN ACCORD WITH THE U.S.

2. CANADIAN REP MADE SEPARATE PRESENTATION ON THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN THE USSR WHICH HE SAID WAS EXTRACTED FROM A JANUARY 17 ASSESSMENT BY THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW.

3. BEGIN TEXT OF CANADIAN PRESENTATION:

THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE POLICIES OF THE GOVERN-
MENT ARE IN SOME TROUBLE. BREZHNEV HAS OF COURSE AVOIDED THE PITFALLS OF KHRUSHCHEV AND SUCCEEDED IN AVOIDING THE TEMPTATION OF GATHERING ALL POWER INTO HIS HANDS. KHRUSHCHEV WAS COMPLETELY ISOLATED WHEN HE WAS OVERTHROWN. BREZHNEV HAS SKILFULLY KEPT HIS COLLEAGUES ASSOCIATED WITH ALL HIS MAJOR INTERNAL MOVES. HE HAS TRIED TO MAKE DETENTE A POLICY
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PAGE 02 NATO 00342 222054Z

ENDORSED BY THE WHOLE POLITBURO BUT HE CANNOT SUCCEED IN THIS ENTIRELY SINCE BY THE NATURE OF SOVIET POLITICS HE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE AUTHOR OF THESE POLICIES, PARTLY BY THE SHEER MOMENTUM OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA MACHINE,

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PARTLY BY THE IRRESISTIBLE URGE TO BE NUMBER ONE.

NEVERTHELESS SOMEONE SERIOUSLY MISCALCULATED ON BOTH THE MIDEAST AND TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE USA. IT IS QUITE CONCEIVABLE THAT BREZHNEV HIMSELF REACHED THESE CONCLUSIONS AS WELL AS POSSIBLE CRITICS AND ADJUSTED QUICKLY TO NEW CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE CAUTIOUS NATURE OF BREZHNEV AND WOULD HELP TO MAINTAIN SUPPORT OF MORE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE HIERARCHY.

UP UNTIL NOW IT HAS SEEMED LIKELY THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN BREZHNEV'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN SOLIDARITY AND STABILITY OF THE REGIME WAS THAT IT IS A CAREFULLY BALANCED MACHINE, THE REMOVAL OF ANY IMPORTANT PIECE FROM WHICH WOULD HAVE ENDANGERED ITS SURVIVAL. THERE SEEMS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THIS SITUATION HAS CHANGED. IT MAY BE THAT THE HEALTH OF BREZHNEV MAY OBLIGE LEADERS TO ADJUST TO THE REMOVAL OF A KEY ELEMENT, BUT THIS IS PROBABLY THE ONLY REASON WHY HE WOULD STEP DOWN. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO ONE DOMINANT PERSONALITY WILLING TO TRY TO OUST HIM, OR INDEED ABLE TO FILL HIS SHOES. SINCE BREZHNEV HAS KEPT TO AS MUCH COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP AS IS POSSIBLE IN THIS COUNTRY, HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD PROBABLY LIKE THE SITUATION TO CONTINUE RATHER THAN RISK/UNCERTAINTIES OF CHANGE.
END TEXT
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